



Loudoun County, Virginia
Department of Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Management

801 Sycolin Road SE, Suite 200
Leesburg, VA 20175
Phone 703-777-0333 Fax 703-771-5359



For Additional Information:

Firefighter Laura Rinehart, Public Information Officer
Loudoun County Fire-Rescue Services
February 25, 2015

For Immediate Release:

"Spring Forward", Change Your Clocks, Check Your Smoke Alarm Batteries

Sunday, March 8th, 2015 we once again "Spring Forward" and set our clocks ahead one hour to Daylight Savings Time. As we do this, Loudoun County's Department of Fire Rescue and Emergency Management reminds citizens that this is the perfect opportunity to check the batteries in your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms.

Last month a properly installed and maintained smoke alarm alerted a family to a fire within their home allowing them to safely escape. Smoke alarms can alert you and your family to a fire 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Whether you're awake or asleep, a working smoke alarm is constantly on alert, scanning the air for fire and smoke. A smoke alarm with a dead or missing battery is the same as having no smoke alarm at all.

"Smoke alarms are the first line of defense in alerting a person to the dangers of smoke and fire," said Fire Chief W. Keith Brower, Jr. "Therefore, it is critical that these life-saving devices are checked and tested frequently to ensure proper functioning."

Remember, smoke alarms *must* be maintained! All smoke alarms should be tested monthly and kept free of dust and debris. Check the manufacturer's expiration date and specifications on the label, replace the batteries if needed and clean dust away so that smoke can enter freely. Whether hardwired or battery driven, all smoke alarms should be completely replaced every ten years. In addition to regular testing and maintenance of these alarms, develop and practice a home escape plan so that everyone in the home knows what to do if an alarm sounds. These simple steps will ensure that you and your family will have the best chance of survival if fire should strike.

Loudoun County Fire and Rescue's "Put a Finger on It" smoke alarm campaign offers free home safety inspections and smoke alarms to all Loudoun County residents. If your smoke alarms are broken or outdated the department will replace them with battery powered alarms at no cost and install additional alarms as necessary. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call the department hotline **703-737-8093** or visit www.loudoun.gov/smokealarms.

Also critical are properly installed and maintained carbon monoxide (CO) alarms. Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that can be fatal at relatively low levels. It's recommended that one CO alarm be installed in the hallway outside the bedrooms in each separate sleeping area of the home. If the CO detector sounds leave your home immediately and call 911. If you suspect CO poisoning and are feeling dizzy, light-headed, or experiencing flu-like symptoms, call 911. To learn more about fire safety, visit www.loudoun.gov/fire or call Lisa Braun, Public Education Manager, at 571-258-3222.

###